3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Pragmatic Effects

In Lubemba the chisungu puts power into the hands of the *nacimbusa*, who is an authority outside the girl's own family although in some cases she is the sister of the girl's father. She is not a member of the bride's own matrilineage. A mother cannot 'dance' her own daughter even though she is a *nacimbusa* of repute, in this initiation ceremony which enforces the rules of marriage and maternity.

The ritual mechanisms used in the chisungu may be further elucidated by continued comparison of this cycle of rites with the chiefly ceremonies already referred to. The difference between the two is striking. It is not only that the ancestral ceremonies consist of prayers while the chisungu consists of meticulously performed magic rites, and mimes, but that the personnel of the two ceremonies is selected in quite dissimilar ways. Those who approach ancestors—the chiefs, priests and headmen—do so by virtue of descent. The ritual is handed on by hereditary succession in the case of headmen, who use quite simple prayers to the ancestors. In the case of big chiefs, who are the focus of very complex ritual, the ceremonies are in the hands of ritual specialists, also chosen on the basis of descent (*bakabilo*). Thus the long rites for the burial of a Citimukulu, the installation of his successor and the building of his new village are controlled by hereditary buriers and keepers of the king's shrines, or by clan authorities with special ritual functions at the court. The chisungu is mainly carried out by commoners with no special relation to the chief and his court, although its occurrence will be reported to the ruler, as is any other important event in his territory. The *banacimbusa* are individuals who have won their way to their position instead of inheriting it. The officiants at the nubility rites are selected on the basis of age, personality and, to a certain extent, location, rather than of lineage, clan or descent from a royal line.

There is a marked difference too in the way the rites are performed. The headman tends to pray to his ancestors at dawn or dusk when the village is quiet and no one is passing to and fro. It does not matter whether other worshippers are present. The rites of great chiefs are secret and no unauthorized people can be present when the Citimukulu prays before his relic shrine. Death used to be the penalty for the man who entered a shrine without due permission.